

Mozambique: Workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism held

CABO DELGADO – The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has collaborated with the Attorney General’s Office of Mozambique to organize a workshop to build the capacity of relevant stakeholders to respond to an increasing threat of terrorism and violent extremism.

The workshop was held in Cabo Delgado from 16 to 18 July 2019 and brought together over 30 Investigators, Prosecutors, Judges and Defense forces officials.

The Province has borne the brunt of violent attacks since October 2017. Over 200 people have been killed, many injured and communities destroyed.

In response to this, criminal justice officials gathered for the first ever national training workshop on investigation and prosecution of terrorism-related offences.

Governor Júlio José Parruque, Governor of the Province of Cabo Delgado, officially opened the workshop. He highlighted the expectations placed on the criminal justice system to successfully prosecute violent crimes, which have taken lives and wreaked havoc on communities in the province.

Speaking during the workshop, Deputy Attorney General Dr. Amabélia Chuquela described it as timely. She said it would assist in devising effective strategies to curb violent attacks, terrorism and violent extremism.

Chuquela stressed the need to act decisively to prevent the situation from becoming uncontrollable and spreading to other provinces of the country. She acknowledged the role of criminal justice actors as “protagonists in the work of confronting the situation in a coordinated and concerted manner”.

UNODC Representative a.i. Mr. Cesar Guedes expressed the United Nations’ commitment to supporting Mozambique in responding to terrorism. He reiterated the UN Secretary General, Mr. Antonio Guterres’ concern at the vulnerability of Mozambique and many African countries to the actions of terrorist groups and youth radicalization, expressed during his visit to Mozambique last July.

Discussions during the workshop revolved around the nature of the threat of terrorism in Mozambique and drew attention to the evolving tactics used by the perpetrators. The nexus between terrorism and organised crime in the country, as well as the layers of responses to the phenomenon and the difficulties that different stakeholders in the criminal justice system have encountered in responding to the changing situation, were also discussed.

The workshop presented a forum to discuss the international counter-terrorism legal framework and the practical application of these international provisions. It noted that Mozambique is a party to 15 out of the 19 International legal instruments against terrorism.

Participants had the opportunity to discuss and share experiences with practitioners from the Netherlands, Spain and South Africa in handling terrorist cases.

They hailed the workshop as the first of its kind in the history of Mozambique.

Ambassador Pedro Commissario, National Director of the Central Office for Countering Drugs emphasized the relevance and timeliness of the training workshop.

Dr. Octávio Zilo, Chief Prosecutor of the Cabo Delgado Province, concurred and said the training would strengthen the capacity and coordination of the criminal justice system in responding to terrorism.

The workshop took place within the context of UNODC's work in supporting SADC countries to strengthen rule of law-based criminal justice responses for preventing and countering terrorism and violent Extremism.



Participants share views during the first ever workshop to build the capacity of relevant stakeholders to respond to an increasing threat of terrorism and violent extremism in Mozambique. Photo: UNODC